

C. C. Smith

# CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER

## AND EASTERN CHRONICLE.

"WERE ONCE THESE MAXIMS FIXED,—THAT GOD'S OUR FRIEND, VIRTUE OUR GOOD, AND HAPPINESS OUR END, HOW SOON MUST REASON O'ER THE WORLD PREVAIL, AND ERROR, FRAUD AND SUPERSTITION FAIL."

VOL. XI.

GARDINER, MAINE, FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1831.

NEW SERIES, VOL. V.—NO. 2.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY  
BY SHELDON & DICKMAN.

WILLIAM A. DREW, Editor.

From the Universalist Examiner.

Criteria of False and True Preaching.

A SERMON.

BY ROSEA BALLOU.

TEXT.—"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."—2 Cor. iv. 5.

The text supposes that there were those who preached themselves, in room of preaching Christ Jesus the Lord; for if there had been none of this description, there would have been no necessity of the Apostle's declaration, that he and his brethren in the ministry were not such. If there were such preachers in the first age of christianity, it is not unreasonable to suppose there may be such in later times, and even in our own. If it be a fact that all who do not preach the truth, as revealed in Christ, preach themselves, there can remain no doubt that we have such preachers at a few.

But it may be asked, What is meant by a man's preaching himself? To this question the following reply appears to be just. If a man preaches a doctrine which he has invented, he preaches himself; because he preaches his own wisdom. Or, if he preaches a creed or a doctrine, which some other man or men have invented, and reduced to what is called a system of divinity, it seems proper to say that he preaches himself, because he preaches the wisdom and understanding, not of God, but of man.

There is one circumstance which renders it almost certain that there are preachers, in our times, who do not preach Christ Jesus the Lord, who is the way, the truth and the life; and that is the well known fact, that there are a number of different doctrines held forth by our preachers, who appear to be as much opposed to each other, as their zeal for their respective creeds renders necessary. Now where many are opposed to each other, it is not impossible that all should be in the right; but it is supposable that all may be wrong. On this subject there is no controversy. All are of the opinion here maintained. No preacher of any denomination, will allow that those who oppose him and his creed, are right.

We have now arrived at a query, in the discussion of which, much caution as well as candor is required. The question is, by what rule, or by what means are hearers to judge and determine who preach themselves, and who preach, not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord? It is very evident that it is unsafe to take the preacher's word in this case, for the two following reasons: first, he may be a dishonest, crafty deceiver. Such impostors have been, in days of old, and are now, unquestionably in the church, and of all denominations. No disposition is indulged of imputing dishonesty to one denomination, more than to another, but both candor and charity, in their humility, are obliged to confess, as well as to lament the fact, that hypocrisy is too often discovered in sacerdotal vestments. But secondly, the preacher may be honest, he may be sincere, and yet he may profess to preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and preach himself. Such is the condition of human nature, that even sincerity is not a security against error. We have good authority for believing that St. Paul, before his conversion to the faith of the gospel, was sincere in his unreasonable and violent opposition to Christianity. He had been brought up in the superstitions of the Pharisees, and had always been in the habit of yielding implicit assent to all the dogmas which were taught by Jewish doctors. He verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. What men were liable to, in former ages, under similar circumstances they are liable to, in all ages. Take an individual for an example. In childhood, he is taught an erroneous creed, by his pious parents. He as much believes in this creed, as he does in the being of God, or in any other religious truth. His parents design him for the ministry; and to the extent of their means, they instruct him in the tenets of that faith, which, though erroneous, they believe is the truth. Of this faith, they earnestly and devoutly pray that their hopeful son may be a zealous and a successful preacher. At the school where he is prepared to enter college, the tenets of his creed, are with equal zeal and with more learning, impressed on his mind. And now he begins to consider it his duty to defend his faith against heretical opposers, and profane unbelievers. As yet, no question respecting the propriety of his own creed, has ever occupied his mind for a moment. Confident in his belief, and with flattering prospects, he enters college, and with commendable zeal and application, pursues his studies, none of which ever suggests a thought in conflict with any part of his creed. Every religious book he is permitted to read, confirms him in his faith; and he wonders at the stupidity of all who oppose it. Having obtained the honors and advantages of a liberal education, his next remove is to a theological institution, where he is to prepare himself for the sacred office. Is

this institution a suitable one to correct the errors he imbibed in childhood, and which have become more fixed as he has advanced in years and in learning? So far from this, it was established for the very purpose of teaching youth how to avoid learning the truth, and how to reconcile the scriptures to all the errors, which he and his theological instructors have unhappily imbibed. The tedious term of these studies ends, and he appears in the desk, a public preacher. But what does he preach? the gospel of Christ? No; he preaches what he has been taught, and what he honestly believes, though it be altogether the invention of men. Now if we rely on this preacher's honest testimony in favor of his being a preacher of Christ Jesus the Lord, and not a preacher of man, we are sure to fall into the same errors which he has imbibed, and which he is now endeavoring to disseminate.

These considerations not only admonish us not to rely on the testimony of any preacher, of any denomination, as assurance that he does not preach himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord, but it also urges the question under consideration, which inquires for some undoubted rule, by which the hearer of preaching, may decide this case for himself. One principal object, designed in the present discourse, is to furnish the hearers with satisfactory criteria by which all preaching may be tried; so that none, who will but remember and make proper use of the directions about to be furnished, need ever be at a loss, when attending the preaching of any doctrine, to determine whether it be wisdom of man, or the wisdom of God.

That the mind be not burdened with too many particulars three only will be stated. And these three shall be of such a character as to give entire satisfaction to every honest heart. No doctrine can be false that is free from the three characteristics about to be named; nor can any doctrine be true which partakes of them. It is furthermore worthy of notice, that whatever doctrine embraces any one of these particulars, will, on due investigation, be found to embrace them all. The hearer is further assured, that the rule now to be put into his hands, is not fashioned for the accommodation of one sect more than another; but is of such a peculiar character as to be acceptable to all men of every sect, whose hearts are honest, and whose understandings are clear.

I. The first particular we shall notice is that of inconsistency, or contradiction. Contradiction, being an incontestable proof of falsehood, is of itself sufficient to condemn any doctrine which contains it. The testimony of a witness, though it be given under the solemnity of an oath, if it contain contradiction, refutes itself; and he who should bear such testimony in court, would forfeit his honor as a man of truth, and be dismissed with disapprobation, if not punished. It would be of no avail for the deponent, in such a case, to inform the court that what appeared to them as contradiction was a mysterious truth which their natural understandings were not capable of discerning. If the natural understanding of man be not capable of judging in this case, it seems altogether improper to lay the testimony before it. Now, as we are compelled to pronounce that false which contains contradiction, relative to the temporal concerns of society, so ought we to do in relation to religious doctrines. Let him, therefore, who hears preaching, listen with all the caution and attention which he would feel bound to exercise, were he hearing the testimony of a witness in a case which was to be decided by his own judgment; let him be able, by such cautious attention, to compare all parts of the sermon, so as to detect any contradiction which the preacher may advance, and if he discover inconsistency in the discourse which he hears, he may, with perfect safety, conclude that the preacher has been laboring to set up no other doctrine than such as the wisdom of this world has invented, in opposition to the wisdom and doctrine of God. On the other hand, if consistency, and harmony of parts, characterize the sermon, it is perfectly safe for the hearer to conclude that the wisdom of God is in it. Truth alone is consistent with itself. There never was a false doctrine, invented by man, that did not contain contradiction, and inconsistency.

Perhaps the hearer will say, if this rule be adopted, I must dismiss, as error, the most of sermons which I have ever heard, and must come to the conclusion that nearly all the preachers, to whom I have listened, have preached themselves, in room of preaching Christ Jesus the Lord. There is scarcely any thing more common than the saying, I cannot understand what the preacher says; it seems to me like contradiction; but I suppose the fault is in myself. This conclusion is in consequence of the preacher's solemn declaration that the natural understanding of his hearers is incapable of discerning the consistency and harmony of the divine mysteries which he is commissioned to preach. But here we detect a gross inconsistency. Why should heaven commission a man to preach to us mysterious truths, which even his preaching cannot bring within the discernment of our understanding?

2. The second peculiar characteristic of false doctrines, is partiality. All the erroneous doctrines which have ever been taught in the world, contain this peculiar mark, and by it may be known to be false. A false doctrine has favors for some, which favors it cannot extend to others. It is true, it will profess to have good reasons for its gracious liberality to its favorites, and also for withholding all mercy from others. If it be asked, by what authority we assert that all doctrines are false which are partial, we offer the following testimony of an acknowledged apostle: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." We are here assured, that in the wisdom or doctrine of God, there is no partiality. All the doctrines, which men have invented, are, or pretend to be, full of mercy and good fruits, for such as are friendly to them and their requirements, and who love and support them; but equally full of wrath and vengeance towards such as do not receive them, nor conform to their precepts. Directly contrary to this is the language of the wisdom of God:—"If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Is it possible that any one, who possesses a common understanding, should not, by this infallible rule, be able to discern the difference between the wisdom which is from above, and the wisdom which is from beneath? That the hearer may have a distinct and clear view of partiality, such as is contained in a doctrine, which has, for a long time, been received, and embraced, as the pure doctrine of the wisdom of God, we will here quote from that Catechism, which lay on our cradles when we were therein rocked by our fond and pious mothers. See question 19 and 20, with their answers. Q. What is the misery of that estate wherein man now fell? A. All mankind by the fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. Q. Did God leave all mankind to perish in this state of sin and misery? A. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer." In this quotation from the Shorter Catechism, we find a most palpable instance, not only of partiality, but also of contradiction. Those reverend doctors of divinity, who in their sage wisdom compiled this Catechism, state it as a matter of positive fact, that all mankind, by the fall, were made liable to the pains of hell forever. But in the same quotation they inform us, that God, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life. Here let us ask how it was possible for those who were, from all eternity, elected to everlasting life, to be made liable to the pains of hell forever, by the fall of man, or by any other means? This contradiction, we presume, did not come into the minds of those doctors of whom we speak; but it is, most evidently, a direct contradiction. In fact, this contradiction involves the most appalling absurdities. It supposes that even the election of God could not prevent man's liability to the pains of hell forever. It also supposes that the covenant of his grace was too weak to prevent this same awful liability! If the question had been put to those divines, at the time they composed this creed, whether they believed that those whom God elected, from all eternity, to everlasting life, were ever, at any time, liable to be lost forever, they would, to a man, have answered in the negative. Why then, it will be asked, did they contradict their own faith? To answer this correctly, no doubt we must say, not because they wished to deceive others; but because they themselves were in the darkness of their own wisdom. In this case, the blind have led the blind; and the consequence has been abundantly such as the Saviour described.

As we have so clearly detected this instance of inconsistency, we may now notice as palpable a case of partiality. In the quotation from the Catechism, its authors first represent all mankind in one and the same estate of sin and misery—all as having lost communion with God—all alike under the divine wrath and curse, and all alike liable to the pains of hell forever. But do they allow that God treated all mankind alike? By no means. They ask the question, "Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?" and in their answer they say, that God "out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to

everlasting life, and did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer." Was there ever a more palpable instance of partiality? Is it in the power of human invention to imagine an instance of partiality more glaring, or appalling? Suppose, the master of a vessel discovers a wreck at sea, and far from land. On approaching it, he finds twelve most miserable sufferers, whose last and only hope was, that God would direct some kind mariner to their relief. The captain orders his men to take four of those perishing creatures from the wreck, put them on board of his own safe and convenient ship, and accommodate them with all their wants require, or the most generous hospitality can bestow; but leaves the remaining eight, who on their knees beg for their lives, to perish without favor. The captain returns from sea, and restores the men whose lives he has saved, to their friends and their homes; and relates all these circumstances to his fellow citizens. They gather round him, and with surprise and impatience ask him, whether it were not in his power to have saved the eight whom he left to perish? He replies, that it was just as easy to have saved them all, as to save the four. They again ask why he did not save them all? He replies, that it was according to his mere good pleasure that he elected the four, and that it was according to his mere good pleasure to leave the rest to perish! With what indignation would such an answer be heard by citizens possessed of those feelings which are common to mankind! And yet, there is no more partiality in this captain's conduct, than there is in the representation of the conduct of God, that we find in the quotation from the Catechism, which we are noticing.

We have been told that such apparent contradictions, and this most manifest instance of partiality, are holy mysteries, which man's carnal reason cannot understand. But whoever will carefully follow the directions of sound, enlightened reason, will reject them, as belonging to the mystery of iniquity.

3. The third peculiar characteristic of the wisdom that is from beneath, and that which will, in addition to the two that have been mentioned, complete the general rule by which all false doctrines may be detected, and by which the hearer may always decide whether the preacher preaches himself, or Christ Jesus the Lord,—is that of unmerciful cruelty. There is not, there never was, a false doctrine invented by man, which may not be known to be false by its containing this most shocking attribute. Will the hearer inquire whether we mean to call the just punishment of sin unmerciful cruelty? whether we mean to accuse the righteous Ruler of the universe with cruelty, if he punish such as rebel against his holy laws, and condemn his authority? To this inquiry we answer, by no means. Just punishment is not cruelty; it is perfectly consistent with mercy, as may be seen both in sound theory and in wholesome practice. The Apostle informs us, as we have before noticed, that the wisdom which is from above is full of mercy. There is therefore, no cruelty in it. That justice, which is administered by the wisdom of God, is an attribute of goodness. This doctrine will be found to be sound in practice as well as in theory. You see a parent chastise his son with a rod—you ask the father why he thus inflicts stripes on his son. The father replies—My son is disobedient; those things which I command him to do, he neglects; and what I command him not to do, he does; he is stubborn and self-willed, and I am under the necessity of inflicting this punishment. You further ask the father whether he intends this punishment shall operate to humble his child, subdue his will, and to make him obedient. The father replies in the affirmative. He moreover tells you, with tears of grief in his eyes, that he has refrained from inflicting such punishment for a long time, in hope of reclaiming his son by admonitions and persuasions; but that these had been tried in vain; that he is now obliged to resort to this more severe measure for the purpose of reducing his child to obedience. The father tells you, that he would much rather receive these stripes himself, if that would as well reform his son. You see no cruelty in all this. You see compassion, parental kindness—yes, mercy designing the very best good of the afflicted son. But suppose, in place of the above answer, the father should reply, with fury in his countenance, No, I have no desire to reform my son; I do not wish him to become obedient; I neither love him nor desire him to love me. But I am determined to inflict all the suffering upon him which I can possibly enable him to bear; and this I shall continue as long as possible. What do you see now? This is cruelty; and it is as much opposed to justice as it is to mercy. The hearer will now understand that punishment, which is not designed to reform, which is inflicted and protracted for no other purpose than to gratify a spirit and disposition of vindictive cruelty, is what we mean by unmerciful cruelty.—In whatever doctrine such punishment is held up, that doctrine is thereby proved

erroneous; and whoever preaches such punishment, preaches not the wisdom which is from above; but he preaches that wisdom which is from beneath; he preaches not Christ Jesus the Lord, but he preaches himself. The spirit and disposition of his doctrine are not of Christ, but they are of himself. They are found in his heart; they are not contained in that wisdom which is full of mercy and good fruits.

Let these three infallible characteristics of false doctrines be always remembered, and let them be associated in the mind of the hearer of preaching, and there will be no difficulty in determining correctly as to the character of the sermon: Contradiction, partiality, and cruelty. These three denominations are contained in all the systems of doctrine which have their origin in the wisdom of man; and whoever preaches them, preaches himself, and not Christ Jesus the Lord.

Having furnished the hearer with the foregoing rule by which he can always detect a false teacher, it may now be of some service to mention what is very common in the manner of those who preach themselves. They have much to say about the love which they feel for their hearers. They profess to have such a deep concern for the salvation of poor immortal souls, that they can scarcely eat their food, or enjoy repose in sleep. They will tell their hearers that they are willing to spend, and be spent for their salvation; and with a vehemence, indicating the utmost anxiety for the danger their hearers are in of falling under the vengeance of an angry God, they warn them to flee from the wrath to come!—Such preaching is frequent and abundant; and most people are deceived by it. They really believe what their preachers say, and dreading the unmerciful wrath of God, they fly to their loving ministers for safety! But what do these ministers preach? They preach their love, their desires to save the people. Now if we allow that they are honest, we must allow that they preach themselves, not Christ Jesus the Lord. If they believed that God's love towards their hearers was as great as they represent their own to be; or if they believed that the love of Christ Jesus the Lord, was as great as their own, they would neither be concerned about the eternal state of their hearers, nor would they think it necessary to awaken in them any apprehensions concerning it. But being ignorant of God's love, they preach their own, and being ignorant of the love of Christ Jesus the Lord, they persuade the people to believe in their love.

But there remains another subject, contained in our text, which deserves special attention, being the major subject which the Apostle had in view. It is that of preaching Christ Jesus the Lord. The method by which we shall now treat this most important division of our general theme, will be by showing how Christ Jesus the Lord is preached, by the testimony of scripture; and that in this scriptural manner of preaching him, we discover a striking contrast to the preaching and doctrine of those who have preached themselves, or the wisdom of man.

In the promise of God to Abraham, Christ Jesus the Lord is thus preached: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." This promise is that covenant of which Christ Jesus the Lord is the mediator; and of it the Apostle says, "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul." Here let us be careful to compare this covenant with the one which we find in the creed, which we have noticed. "God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer." This covenant of grace embraces some; God's covenant of grace embraces all nations. "In thee shall all nations be blessed." Let the hearer distinctly notice the two words; those divines who composed the creed, used the word some; God, who made the promise to Abraham, used the word all.—Do you ask why these doctors did not use the language of scripture? The reason was, they were saying something that man had invented, which is in opposition to the wisdom of God. They could not, therefore, express their wisdom in the language of divine interpretation. Do you again ask, why these divines were so regardless of the divine testimony as to violate it so directly? We answer, they were engaged in a concern of their own; they made use of their own language; and their language was suited to their subject as well as is the language of divine inspiration to the blessed gospel which it proclaims.

In the following manner did the inspired Isaiah preach Christ Jesus the Lord: "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be



established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." Compare this with the promise, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." Notice the word *all*, and remember to compare it with the word *some*. The same inspired prophet again says, "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it."—Here again notice that the prophet uses the words, *all people, all nations, all faces, and all the earth*. The assembly of divines who wrote the Catechism, gravely informs us that God from all eternity elected *some*!

In the following language does the prophet Daniel preach Christ Jesus the Lord: "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." The forerunner of Christ preached him, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The beloved disciple preached Christ, saying, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." To the Romans, St. Paul thus preached Christ:—"Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." To the Ephesians, the same apostle preaches Christ, saying, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." To the Philippians, he preaches Christ as follows: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." To Timothy, the same apostle holds this language; having exhorted him to pray for all men, he adds as reason therefor, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." If it had been the sole purpose of the inspired writers, in penning the passages here quoted, to refute all the arguments which have been used in favor of limited salvation, and partial favor, it seems impossible that they could have been more explicit. What clergyman, believing in limited grace, and partial salvation, would be willing to go before a congregation and say, My friends, there is much dispute in the christian world, concerning the question, whether all men will finally be saved by Jesus Christ the Lord, or only a part. I am willing that this long contested point should be settled by the divine testimony; and after stating thus, proceed to quote the passages which we have just not, verbatim, and conclude by saying, Here, my friends, you have the divine testimony on the weighty subject; and according to this testimony you are all bound to believe.

It seems that no sincere christian would be willing to object to the manner in which the angel of God preached Christ Jesus the Lord. The time of this memorable sermon was the birth of the Saviour. The audience were the Shepherds. The exordium was short, but comprehensive:—"Fear not." How very different is this from the wisdom which is from beneath. The preacher devoted to its interests, begins by exciting all the fear he can. Unless he can fill his audience with fear, he has little hope of success. The angel's sermon was also short; but no sermon ever comprehended more: "For, behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." After this sermon, there was an appropriate hymn sung, by an heavenly choir. The hymn, like the sermon, was short; but heaven nor earth ever heard one which expressed more, or devotion more pure: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." With what surprise would our christian churches be filled, should their ministers all come into their respective pulpits, and address their congregations thus: My beloved hearers, I have no doubt that you have much reasoning in your minds, on the question whether all men will be saved, or not; and I have studied the subject myself with prayerful solicitude; for I view it of immense weight. But the question is settled in the divine wisdom; it is fully expressed in the declaration of the angel of God to the shepherds; and then, with suitable emphasis, pronounce the declaration! In place of doing this, they have to study for years, at colleges and theological institutions, to learn how to evade the force of the divine declarations; and the rest of their lives they spend in proving to the world that no such thing was meant as is set forth by them.

Another discourse, in which the preacher preached not himself, but Christ the

Lord, was delivered in the temple, by the aged Simeon. Taking the blessed babe in his arms, he blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." It has often been said, by the opposers of impartial salvation, that no man dare to die, in the belief that all will be saved. This was not the sentiment of aged Simeon; in this belief, it seems, he was almost impatient to depart.

In view of the scripture manner of preaching Christ Jesus the Lord, we feel to lament the fact, that it is but little regarded, and seldom imitated, in our times. Could preachers, generally be persuaded to preach Christ in the language of divine wisdom, what a dark cloud would remove from the whole horizon of the christian church! In place of gloom and despair, what light and joy would succeed!

The station of the minister of Jesus Christ, and the character he should be careful to sustain, are expressed in the concluding clause of our text. "And ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake." The servant should be careful to do what his master requires. If it is to preach, he should preach according to his mission. St. Paul says: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The doctrine of the New Testament is not death; but it is life. Among many professed christians, in our times, a minister is thought to be able accordingly as he administers death. And those who can best succeed in bringing apprehensions and fears into the minds of their hearers, are thought to be the most able. When the angel of God brought the apostles out of prison, he thus charged them: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." In room of preaching to the people all the words of that life and immortality which are brought to light through the gospel, it seems to be the whole business of too many to preach to the people all the words of death and condemnation which have been invented by the wisdom that is from beneath! Again St. Paul says: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." If we could believe that many who preach were divinely commissioned, we should suppose that they were commanded to preach the unsearchable fullness of everlasting wrath!

That abject slavery, in which the christian clergy have held the people for ages, shows, in a most striking manner, how entirely opposite their conduct has been to that which, according to our text, it ought to have been.

My friends, in viewing the errors and wrongs which have appeared, as we have proceeded in these discussions, let us be humble; and while contemplating the divine goodness which has been presented, let us be grateful, and rejoice in the Lord.

THE INTELLIGENCER.

—And Truth diffuse her radiance from the Press.

GARDINER, FRIDAY, JANUARY 14.

WHITMAN'S LETTERS TO PROFESSOR STUART.

Our readers will recollect that several months since Prof. Stuart addressed a Letter to Dr. Channing on the subject of charges brought by the latter against the orthodox as being unfriendly to free inquiry and religious liberty. Prof. S. solemnly denied the truth of these charges, calling on Dr. C. to make them good by sufficient evidence, or publicly abandon them.

A few weeks since we announced on the authority of the Boston papers, that a Reply to Prof. S's letter was forth coming from a distinguished Unitarian Clergyman of Massachusetts. Rev. B. Whitman of Waltham is the gentleman who has taken the task off of Dr. C's hands, who probably did not consider himself bound to run at the bidding of the *suavus* Professor at Andover, and has just published a Reply in an octavo pamphlet of 165 pages. We have availed ourselves of the first opportunity to purchase a copy, and we must say we know not when we have taken greater pleasure in reading a work, than was derived from perusing Mr. Whitman's Letters. The orthodox say the book is not an Answer to Prof. S. We think it is a most effectual jony; but whether it is such, categorically speaking, or not, we care but very little. It is enough for us that the author has told a *mouthful of home truths*, in a style unusually plain and definite. He has indeed made out his case beyond what could have been required of him. He asks not his readers to rely upon his assertions,—he offers *proof* in abundance in support of all he says. We wish it was in our power to treat the reader to the whole of it; but as this is impossible, we invite every one to search the work out and give it a faithful perusal. Few will wish to rise from the book without reading every page. It is a severe home thrust at Prof. S. and his orthodox brethren. They will rue the day that Prof. S. gave the occasion for Mr. W. to tell his plain tale—and he promises more facts in another edition, should circumstances call for further disclosures. In his first Letter Mr. W. argues to this point:—That the measures practiced by the orthodox are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty and the principles of Congregationalism. Among the first class of proofs to this point, we copy the following, which relates to Professor Stuart personally and the Andover Institution.

In the first place, I invite your attention to the use made of human creeds by the orthodox denomination. I think the facts I shall adduce under this head will prove the two following and distinct propositions. First, that the orthodox denomination make a human creed, and not the Bible, their standard of religious truth. And, secondly, that the use made of human creeds by the orthodox denomination is subversive of

free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. My limits will permit me to notice but six different classes of facts under this general division.

1. *Theological Seminaries.* First. Look at the use made of a human creed in orthodox theological seminaries. Take the institution at Andover as a fair illustration. Before you could be admitted into the office of Professor, you were obliged to express your hearty belief in all the statements of the following human creed.

Here follows the creed in extenso, which, as it is very long, we must omit.

Now, Sir, you will acknowledge, that this creed was manufactured by frail, fallible, prejudiced mortals. You will also admit, that scarcely an article of the whole can be expressed in Scriptural language. You will likewise grant, that many of the most learned and pious christians have rejected the peculiarities of this human formula as unchristian. Should a prayerful perusal of the sacred writings lead you to an open denial of the truth of any one of these articles, you must lose your situation as Professor. Now which is a Professor's standard of religious truth, as a Professor, this human creed, or the Bible? The creed, surely. For should you refuse to profess your belief in all its statements, you could not be inducted into the office of Professor. And should you refuse to renew your assent every five years, you must be dismissed from the Seminary; although you should firmly adhere to the Bible, and offer to express your belief in the very words of inspiration, and continue to exhibit a christian temper and character.

And is not this use of the human creed subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? For, what inquiries have you liberty to pursue? Would you inquire into the truth of your creed, so as to correct any errors that may pertain to this human composition? No. This liberty you have sacrificed. You must never presume to make a single alteration in this human formula; but you and your successors must sacredly use it as the perfect standard of religious truth for ever. For so you are bound to conduct, by the following authoritative injunction from the constitution of your seminary. "It is strictly and solemnly enjoined, and left in sacred charge, that every article of the above said creed shall for ever remain entirely and identically the same, without the least alteration, addition, or diminution."—Would you inquire into the meaning of the Scriptures, so as to communicate to your pupils the result of your investigations? No. This liberty you have sacrificed. You have bound yourself most firmly to make your religious instructions conform exactly to the sentiments of the human creed. These are the words of your solemn obligation.

And furthermore I do solemnly promise, that I will open and explain the Scriptures to my pupils with integrity and faithfulness; that I will maintain and inculcate the christian faith, as expressed in the creed, by me now repeated."—Would you inquire into the peculiar religious opinions of other christian denominations, so as to ascertain if their belief is not founded on the plain teachings of inspiration? No. This liberty you have sacrificed. You have pledged yourself to regard the sentiments of other sects as erroneous, and to defend your creed in opposition to all who dissent from any of its articles. These are the words of your sacred oath. "And furthermore I do solemnly promise, that I will maintain and inculcate the christian faith, as expressed in the creed, by me now repeated."

—Should a prayerful study of the Bible enable you to discover a slight error in some one article of this long creed, could you retain your situation as Professor? No. This liberty you have sacrificed. The moment you advance in religious knowledge and truth one step beyond the ideas of this human formula, you must vacate your office; you must be cast on the wide world with a dependent family; you must encounter coldness and frowns and reproaches from your former associates; you must be privately and publicly denounced as an apostate, a heretic, and infidel; and above all, you must be sentenced to endless torments for your honest preference of the teachings of revelation to the articles of a human creed, if treated as others have been who have embraced unitarianism. These are the words of your constitution. "The preceding Creed and Declaration shall be repeated by every Professor on this foundation, at the expiration of every successive period of five years; and no man shall be continued a Professor on said foundation, who shall not continue to approve himself a man of sound and orthodox principles in divinity." AGREEABLY TO THE AFORESAID CREED." Sir, is this the way you show your respect and reverence for the Bible? Is this the way you divest yourself of all party prejudices, when you proceed to search the Scriptures? Is this the way you prepare yourself to investigate religious subjects with honesty, and boldness, and fearlessness? Is this the way you enjoy the meridian splendor of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism?

But perhaps you will aver, that there is no possible danger of your ever dissenting from the sentiments of this human creed. Then why all these fortifications? And have not many divines, as wise, as learned, as honest, as pious as yourself, been led, by a patient and prayerful study of the Scriptures, to renounce their belief in the

peculiarities of your standard of religious truth? Is it not a fact, that one of the principal founders of your institution, one of the principal framers of this very creed, and one of the earliest professors in your seminary, became a Liberal Christian after dissolving his connexion with your theological faculty, and warmly opposed to many of your illiberal and exclusive measures? Is it not a fact, that several ministers, who pursued the regular course of theological studies in your institution, and who were regarded amongst the most talented, the most learned, the most sincere, the most pious of your students, have since embraced unitarian sentiments? Is it not a fact, that several others, of high standing and good christian character, were led to renounce orthodox views, even before they had completed the usual term of education in your seminary? Is it not a fact, that many of the most distinguished unitarian preachers of the age were once as zealously orthodox as you now are? Is it not a fact, that every year witnesses the conversion of more or fewer orthodox ministers to the unitarian faith? And could you be placed in similar circumstances, what would prevent similar results? I do not mean to insinuate that you are knowingly influenced by your peculiar oaths and obligations to make the Scriptures bend to the articles of your creed. But I must be permitted to declare, that almost all earthly motives, which can operate on the human heart, combine to make it your interest to find none but orthodox views in the Bible. And I must further aver, that I am unable to conceive of a situation, more unfavorable to free inquiry and religious liberty, than the office of Professor in orthodox theological seminaries.

This is but his first class of facts under the first general division of his first Letter. Prof. S. has frequently boasted before the public of his great freedom, of making the Bible, the Bible only, the rule of his faith, &c. After the mention of the above facts, it seemed to us that Prof. S's freedom was like that of the prisoners in solitary cells in England, mentioned by Goldsmith, who though they could not pass, nor even look beyond their cells, and were fettered and handcuffed, were terribly alarmed lest the French troops under Napoleon should effect a landing on the Island of Great Britain, in which case all their boasted liberty as Englishmen must come to an end!

Mr. W. has six pages devoted to Prof. S's hostility to Unitarians, and his attempts to deprive us of our civil rights. The reader shall see our author's able, and fraternal remarks on this subject next week. In the designs of the orthodox in relation to Unitarians Mr. W. ends one of the strongest proofs of their anti-republicanism, their enmity to civil and religious liberty. Indeed the whole history of the orthodox church from the days of the wicked murderer of Servetus, (Calvin) down to the present time, shows them to have been the most constant, and deadly foes to free inquiry and the equal rights of man, ever known in Christendom.

#### BURLINGTON, VT.

Br. Fayette Mace of this State is at present engaged in preaching in Burlington. By a letter from him a few days since, we learn that the word in that place has free course, and the cause of truth flourishes encouragingly. His meetings are the largest in town. On the 1st inst. a respectable number of believers organized a Society. The editor is indebted to him, chiefly, for a generous list of subscribers in Burlington for the "Christian Preacher."

By a letter from Br. S. C. LOVELAND, of Reading, Vermont, we are informed that he has come to the conclusion to postpone his visit to Maine until next summer. It is his intention to come amongst us about the time of the meeting of the Maine Convention in June.

For want of room on the 2d page of the covers of the "Preacher" we were obliged to omit the names of several AGENTS for the work. They will be inserted in full in No. 2. Subscribers generally, if most convenient, can pay the amount of their subscriptions to the persons who forwarded their names to the Editor. Their bills are sent in the present No. in the expectation that each one will make payment, and that that payment will reach the Editor, before the February No. is printed—in season to insure their Receipts from the Editor, in that Number.

#### NEW PAPER.

A new Unitarian paper, entitled "The Philanthropist" has been commenced in Ithaca, N. Y. We have not seen a number of it.

Subscribers to the "CHRISTIAN PREACHER" in Augusta will find their copies at the Bookstore of H. Spaulding & Co.

#### ORTHODOX CONSISTENCY.

The Editor of the Philadelphian says, in his last paper:—

"At a time when all the infidels an Unitarians in the country are vehemently assailing the whole system of Biblical Christianity, and opposing the efforts of the pious to convert the world to the religion of Jesus, it is not desirable for those who love the same Master to court controversy with each other."

In the same paper, and on the next column, is a letter to the Editor, signed, A Presbyterian Layman, which commences thus:—

—Rev. E. S. Ely, D. D.

Dear Sir,—In the present age of christian enterprise and benevolence, it is gratifying to the believer, to behold the signs of the times, and with an eye of faith to anticipate the promised era, when all shall know the Divine Redeemer from the least to the greatest."

The Doctor represents Unitarians as "vehemently assailing the whole system of Biblical Christianity" because they believe, and inculcate the sentiment, that the world will be converted, and that the "promised era" will assuredly come, "when all shall know the Divine Redeemer from the least to the greatest."

Religious Inquirer.

#### ASSOCIATION.

An Association of Universalist clergymen will be held in Unity, N. H. on the 26th and 27th inst.

#### DEDICATION.

A chapel erected for the use of the Universalists in Pomfret, Vt. was dedicated to the service of God on the 30th ult.

#### ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

[For the Christian Intelligencer.]

#### REPENTANCE.

BR. DREW.—I am of the opinion that the subject of repentance is one of much importance, and one too, I have reason to believe, which is not generally understood by the Christian community. It was the early command of our Saviour that we should repent; says he, "repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and John the Baptist held the same significant language when he first entered upon his labors, "as the voice of one crying in the wilderness" Paul in his time said God "commandeth all men every where to repent" &c. and why are the children of men so frequently called upon to repent, unless a powerful and cogent reason exists why they should repent?

It must be admitted, I think, that the states or characters of all men are such, that repentance is necessary and that it conduces to their happiness to obey the command, and yield obedience to the call, from Heaven, for God requires nothing of his creatures, and enjoins nothing upon them to perform, which is not calculated in some way to conduce to their best and lasting good and happiness. His commands are not arbitrary, they are reasonable, just and put forth in mercy.

I do not, I cannot, believe that the glory of God and man's best good are separable, but that they are inseparable and will so eternally remain. Hence when God commands us to repent, it is because our repentance would be well pleasing in his sight as it would render us better and dispose us to be obedient to his commands in the doing of which we should glorify him with our bodies and spirits that are his. Let us then inquire, what is repentance? what are the means by which it is effected? and what are the consequences resulting from this act? for such it must be, if indeed it be performed by mortal men.

Repentance implies a change of conduct—the idea may be illustrated by the following simile:—

A person commences a journey for a certain place; travels on for a number of miles, and perhaps days, till he has reason to believe he has not taken the road that leads to the place whither he desired to go. He makes inquiry and learns that the course he is now travelling is, instead of bringing him to the place desired carrying him directly from it. Of this fact he is fully persuaded, he is brought to a stand in his mind; deliberates, reflects, and finally resolves to change his course, to retrace his steps and from correct information, pursue the road which will conduct him to his place of destination. This he does immediately. Of that man it may with propriety be said, he has repented. Why? Because he has turned about, and is pursuing another road.

But, says one, was not the sorrow which he felt when he learned he was wrong, repentance? No, his sorrow was not repentance; for he might have been sorrowful and yet not retrace his steps, nor turn about. The only evidence we have that he was sorrowful in consequence of his mistake, is, his changing his conduct and taking a different road. The idea of repentance then presupposes sorrow and regret and indeed no person would abandon one object and pursue another unless he became dissatisfied with it, or was sorry that he had embarked in it.

We can have no satisfactory evidence of one's repentance then, only in the fact that they have abandoned one object and are pursuing another; for supposing that the man on a journey had (after he learned and was satisfied that he was wrong) still pursued the same road, what reason should we have to believe that he has repented? Certainly none at all, my deductions from the above reasoning are the following: Repentance was his changing his course, which he did because he was sorry that he had pursued the wrong road. His sorrow was occasioned by the knowledge which he obtained, by which he knew that he was wrong, and the consequence resulting was that he finally arrived at the place which he desired to go.

That I am correct in the above ideas, who will deny? no one, I will proceed in the discussion of my subject, the subject of true and sincere repentance; and it amounts to this, to "cease to do evil and learn to do well," to abandon every wicked and immoral practice and habit, to eradicate from our minds all evil and impure thoughts. This would be "repentance unto life"—to salvation, which needeth not to be repented of; for it presupposes that we pursue an opposite course of conduct and indulge and foster different thoughts, and that our minds are occupied with different reflections, or with reflections upon better, more holy and exalted subjects. It presupposes that we desire to do right in all things and to comply invariably with the requirements of God. When this is effected, we have repented.

But as men are so wicked and vile, it is inquired how they come to repent? I answer, because of the regret and sorrow which they experience in consequence of their past conduct, their former follies. They were in pursuit of happiness; that alone they wished for, and they had marked their course and were travelling onward in search of it; they sought it in the ways of sin and folly; they sought it in







